Hanoi's Strategy In Paris and Saigon, P. 4

An Historic Recommendation On Poverty By A Group of Leading Business Men

"The present system of public assistance does not work well. It covers only 8 million of the 30 million Americans living in poverty. It is demeaning, inefficient, inadequate and has so many disincentives built into it that it encourages continued dependency."

—From a report by the Arden House Committee of 12 business men, including a Vice Chairman of the Ford Motor Company, to Governor Rockefeller, recommending an income maintenance system like the negative income tax to end abject poverty.

I. F. Stone's Weekly

Now Published Bi-Weekly

VOL. XVI, NO. 10 MAY 13, 1968 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20 CENTS

The Rich March On Washington All the Time

No other Western country permits such a large proportion of its people to endure the lives we press on our poor. To make four-fifths of a nation more affluent than any people in history, we have degraded one-fifth mercilessly.

—Report of the Citizens Inquiry Into Hunger

To see the Poor People's March on Washington in perspective, remember that the rich have been marching on Washington ever since the beginning of the Republic. They came in carriages and they come on jets. They don't have to put up in shanties. Their object is the same but few respectable people are untactful enough to call it handouts. Washington owes its very existence as the capital to a deal for the benefit of wealthy speculators. They had bought up the defaulted bonds issued to finance the Revolution, paying as little as 15 cents on the dollar to the needy original investors. The speculators wanted repayment at full face value. It was only by promising to move the capital from Philadelphia to a new city to be built on the Potomac that Alexander Hamilton could get enough Southern votes to swing the deal.

The Trickle-Down Theory

The fiscal and banking system of the new Republic was thus solidly established on the basis of a $20 million handout to the rich and on the Hamiltonian theory that if the new government would channel enough of the national wealth to the top some of it would eventually trickle down. In the meantime the farmer and the consumer would pay the taxes and the tariffs to keep the investor fat and happy. Ever since then the public treasury and the public lands have been a major source of the great American fortunes down to our own day of never-ending oil depletion allowances. The tax structure and the laws bear the imprint of countless marches on Washington; these have produced billions in hidden grants for those who least need them. Across the facade of the U.S. Treasury should be engraved, "To him who hath shall be given."

One easy and equitable way to finance an end to abject poverty in this country would be to end the many tax privileges the wealthy have acquired. A 12-man committee of industrialists and financiers has just recommended to Governor Rockefeller of New York a form of that guaranteed income the marching poor will demand. The committee proposes a negative income tax to raise 30 million of our neediest above the poverty level. Instead of paying income taxes they would receive enough from the Treasury to bring their incomes up to a minimum of $3300 a year for a family of four. The additional cost would be about $11 billion a year. That is what the more obvious tax loopholes for the rich now drain from the U.S. Treasury.*

Few people realize that our present tax and welfare structure is such as to encourage the wealthy to speculate and the poor to vegetate. If a rich man wants to speculate, he is encouraged by preferential capital gains and loss provisions which give him a 25% cushion against losses and take less than half as much on his speculative gains as on his normal earnings. But if a poor man on relief took a part-time job,

(*Continued on Page Two*)

Just Step This Way, Folks, And See How We Enrich The Poor

Lyndon Johnson reminds us of an old-time carnival medicine man who just can't break the habit of the phoney spiel. When asked about the Poor People's March on Washington at his May 3 press conference, he came up with the overstatement of the century. He said Congress already "has under consideration some $80 billion worth of recommendations that the President has submitted in connection with social matters and welfare and poor and security payments and additional food allotments and so forth." If the government were even considering $80 billions for welfare, there would be no need for the Poor People's March. That would be giving poverty equal treatment with war; $80 billion is what we are going to spend on the Pentagon. Johnson's slick remark sent us startled to the budget to see how he could possibly have arrived at such a figure. He got $80 billion by including almost everything the government spends on domestic affairs, except interest payments. To reach the $80 billion figure you have to add up just about everything else but the defense, space and international affairs budgets. Into that $80 billion go all the normal expenditures on veterans, agriculture and commerce as well as almost $40 billions normally paid out from social security funds. We wouldn't be surprised if, hidden away here and there in this compilation, even some of those secret payments to the CIA thus also figure as welfare. Who knows, after all, how many Marchers may be CIA men?

*** The figure is from a staff study made for Senator Proxmire as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress.**

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Millions In Handouts for Rich Farmers While the Poor Starve

(*Continued from Page One*)

he had until very recently to pay a 100% tax on his earnings in the shape of a dollar-for-dollar reduction in his relief allowance. Even now after a belated reform in the welfare system, a poor man on relief after his first $30 a month in extra earnings must turn back to the Treasury 70 cents on the dollar while the rich man need pay the Treasury only 25 cents of every dollar he wins on the market even when his normal income tax rate is more than 50 percent. Such is the topsy-turvy morality of the Internal Revenue laws.

Whence Crime In The Streets

A heart-breaking report on hunger by a Citizens Board of Inquiry has just lifted the curtain on why the poor are marching. In the richest country in the world people eat clay to still the pains of an empty belly, children come to school too hungry to learn, and the infants of the poor suffer irreversible brain damage from protein deprivation. Much of the crime in the streets springs from hunger in the home. Much of this hunger is also linked to hand-outs for those who do not need them. Some of its roots may be found in subsidy programs designed to encourage farmers to make more money by producing less food. The effect has been to push the poor off the land and into the ghettoes. A program designed 30 years ago ostensibly to help the desperate family farmer has become a source of huge handouts to big farmers and farm corporations.

In 1967 the 42.7% of our farmers with incomes of less than $2500 a year received only 4.5% of total farm subsidies paid by the government while the top 10%, many of them farm corporations or vertical trusts in food processing, received 64.5% of these subsidies. The contrast between these handouts for rich farming interests and the stingy surplus food allotments for the poor is dramatically displayed in the statistical appendices of the Citizens' Report on Hunger. In the calendar year 1966 a quarter billion dollars in farm subsidies were paid to a lucky landowning two one-hundreths of one percent of the population of Texas while the 28.8% of its population below the poverty line received less than $8 million in all forms of food assistance. Such grotesque maldistribution of Federal aid is not limited to the South. That same year the U.S. Treasury paid almost $36 million in farm subsidies to one-third of one percent of the population of Nebraska while only $957,000 in surplus food allotments went to the 26.1% of its population which is in poverty. One farm company in California, J. G. Boswell, was given $2,807,633 in handouts by the Treasury that year and the Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company got $1,236,355 in Federal sweetening.

Such are the huge hogs that crowd the public trough. Other even bigger corporations live on the gravy that drips from the military and space programs. We may never reach the moon—or know what to do with it when we get there—but the race for it has already created a new generation of Texas millionaires. The arms race and the space race guarantee the annual incomes of many in the country club set.

Even before the marchers began arriving, the President at his latest press conference was already inviting them to leave. Their demands would be "seriously" considered, he said, "and then we expect to get on with running the government as it should be." For years, "running the government as it should be" has meant financing and planning these programs which are the welfare systems of the American upper classes. Three-

When A Handout Is Free Enterprise

"In listening to the arguments against limiting farm subsidies, I detected support from the other side of the aisle for the idea of a guaranteed annual income. I hope that support will persist when legislation for it finally comes before this House.

"I should point out that $10,000 is a substantial sum of money. Think of what an outcry there would be if a mother on welfare with a dozen children in New York were to receive anything like $10,000 in welfare payments. That family would be labeled welfare chiselers. But when a farmer receives $100,000 for not growing who knows what, that is free enterprise."

—Rep. William F. Ryan (D.-N.Y.), May 1, during debate on the Findley (R.-Ill.) amendment to the Agriculture Appropriation Bill. This amendment would have placed a $10,000 ceiling on individual farm subsidies. The amendment was rejected by secret vote, 129 to 79.

"Volunteers"—Or Merely Draftees Who Did Not Have to Be Rounded Up By the Police?

On ABC's Issues and Answers March 31, Walt Rostow, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, painted an optimistic picture of what happened in South Vietnam as a result of the Tet offensive. He claimed that in February "about 20,000-odd men joined the armed forces" and that "more than half of them were volunteers." He added that this was "two and a half times the level of a year ago." Mr. Rostow cited this as evidence for a surge of patriotic feeling.

A rather different picture is provided by the London Times correspondent in South Vietnam. He reported April 24 on a visit to the III Corps induction center at Cap Diep some 15 miles north of Saigon. He said that about a third of the young men called up had to be arrested by the police but that the camp Commandant, Major Phu, "said this was an improvement over last year, when the police had to bring in four out of every five conscripts." Now about two-thirds were responding to the draft. "Major Phu," he wrote, "claimed that this was due to an upsurge of nationalist spirit after the bitter fighting at Tet." But Major Phu unlike Mr. Rostow did not claim they were volunteers—only that they no longer had to be arrested.

The London Times correspondent wondered whether this was not due to the penalties now imposed on men who have to be brought in forcibly. These men cannot become non-commissioned officers and do not have the option of serving close to their home provinces. "The new conscription rules are pulling in more recruits," the London Times account went on, "but with so many young men desperately unwilling to join the Army, and especially to serve in the front line, there is a continuing high rate of desertions. With all this," the report concludes, "it is an unconscious irony for the Government to talk about the Vietcong recruiting their troops at gunpoint." A similar report appeared the same day in the London Telegraph whose correspondent visited the same induction center.

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The Last Chance for A Multi-Racial and Non-Violent Outcome

quarters of the poor get no help. Two-thirds of our hungry schoolchildren are not reached by the school lunch program. But finding the money to help them is not part of "running the government as it should be," i.e. with a budget allocated 80% to the Pentagon and 10% to health, education and welfare.

A Warfare, Not A Welfare, State

Ours is a warfare, not a welfare, state. And unless the better conscience of the country can be mobilized, it will wage war upon the poor, too. Only twice before in our history have the poor marched on Washington—Coxey's Army of the jobless in 1894 and the bonus marchers in 1932. Both times they were easily dispersed by force. The last heartless chapter of the flinty Hoover Administration was the attack of Gen. MacArthur's troops upon the encampment of the bonus marchers on the Anacostia flats. This time the shanties will not be burned down nor the poor scattered so easily. A clash could set off the hottest summer yet of our nascent civil war. The poor may prove an irresistible force. The Congress is certainly an immovable object.

At this dangerous juncture we need a crusade of the progressive well-to-do to supplement the efforts of the poor people's march. We are glad to see that SANE and a group of other organizations is calling for demonstrations of support throughout the country for Saturday, May 25. We need volunteers to stand on street corners and collect money to feed the encampment of the poor in Washington. And we need an army of young white idealists to ring doorbells in the suburbs and awaken the middle class to the crisis the poor may precipitate. What lies ahead may be far more important than the election.

We wish the unaware millions of the suburbs could have heard the extraordinary collection of spokesmen for the poor whom the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy brought to Wesley A.M.E. Church for a preliminary rally here last week. The volcanic despair of our Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Spanish Americans and poor whites has thrown up new and unknown leaders able to present their case with an untaught and unmatchable eloquence. The descendants of the enslaved, the conquered and the dispossessed have found voices which makes one realize what human resources lie untapped among them. It was also thrilling in a time of rising separation to join hands again with blacks in singing We Shall Overcome and to feel how truly this movement stems from Martin Luther King's teaching. If this fails, multi-racialism and non-violence will fail with it. Yet fail it must unless the middle class and the suburb can be aroused to pressure Congress for the steps required to wipe out poverty. "There is nothing," Martin Luther King said, "except a tragic death wish, to prevent us from reordering our priorities, so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war." Now is the time for the white and the fortunate to organize themselves for this work of solidarity. This—it cannot be said too often—may be our last chance.

When A Bureaucrat Hears Of Hunger

The verbal tactics—the official releases—which confront a simple cry of hunger have been heard so often that they can be classified quite readily: 1. I deny that you are hungry. Prove it. 2. You are the exception. 3. I admit the facts but you have not submitted physical and biochemical evidence of malnutrition, only a subjective state of mind. 4. I admit the facts but there are countervailing policies and priorities such as Vietnam, crime, etc. 5. Here the official argues the problem is not simply hunger—but hunger plus health, plus poverty, plus education, plus unemployment, plus technological advances—and that consequently he lacks jurisdiction. 6. Failure to join the necessary parties. 7. Improper venue. 8. Prematurity of request. 9. Improper forum. 10. Remand for appropriate agency. 11. Recrimination. Here the official admits the charge of hunger but claims it to be the fault of the hungry, saying that if he selected his diet wisely and made proper use of available resources, the condition would not exist.

—Citizens Report on Hunger in the USA.

From the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy's Eloquent Appeal for The Poor on Capitol Hill

We don't think it's too much to ask for a decent place to live in at reasonable prices in a country with a Gross National Product of 800 billion dollars. Can it really be believed that we really don't care that our children are bitten by rats, that we are packed into barren cubbyholes, plagued by roaches? We have heard that when zoos are planned, great care is taken to make sure that an environment is created where animals can be happy and feel at home. Are the poor citizens of this land entitled to any less consideration by their government?

The unemployment rates in our rural and urban ghettoes are of alarming proportions. We are here because we want to work. We want training programs. But the most bitter mockery of all is to find that either there is no job at all waiting, or that we are once again condemned to exchange our manhood for dead-end jobs which pay a boy's wages. Existing programs for creating jobs simply are not working. The Concentrated Employment Program which the Labor Dept. predicted would produce 150,000 jobs by January 1968 produced only 8,000 jobs. We must see to it that the welfare trap is sprung for the able-bodied, so that they can get out of poverty and stay out.

At the same time we must insure support at a civilized level for those who are too young, too old or who are physically or mentally disabled. We need an immediate income maintenance program. At a bare minimum, Congress should set a fair Federal standard of need for welfare payments. And we must, in the name of God, repeal the forced work program for mothers and the freeze on AFDC mothers contained in the Social Security Act of 1967.

We have heard all our lives that there are no gains without pains. And all our lives we have had to endure the pains without gains. Is it too much to ask that this time if taxes are raised and expenditures cut, it not be done at the expense of the poor? Must we support a multi-billion dollar space program, a massive defense budget, millions for supersonic pleasure planes, tax advantages to the richest and most powerful corporations in the world—can we do all these things, and yet not provide a job that pays a living wage, a decent house, the food to make a child healthy and strong?

—The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, leader of the Poor People's March, to the Senate subcommittee on Manpower, Employment and Poverty, April 30.

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The New Yorker's South-East Asia Correspondent Exposes A New LBJ Whopper

Nobody But Lyndon? Hanoi (Unlike Wash.) Seems to Know What It Wants

SOMETIMES, IN BETWEEN SLEEP and waking, as in the opening pages of Proust, this seems to be the blurriest election campaign ever. The newest candidates to enter the race sound like Lyndon B. Humphrey and Lyndon B. Rockefeller while that other Republican is so fiercely loyal to LBJ and so quick to growl against any critics, like a faithful dog at the White House West Gate, that we begin to think of him as Lyndon B. Nixon.

Sometimes it's hard to remember whether those remarks about not putting up the white flag in Vietnam or giving in to crime in the streets came from Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington or somebody out there in Indiana named Lyndon B. Kennedy. Since we clearly recall that Lyndon will neither seek nor accept the nomination, the only man really running seems to be Eugene McCarthy.

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE are proving more skillful at diplomacy than Johnson and his team. Johnson talks too much and fibs too easily. As a result Hanoi had a chance to exploit his "anywhere, any time," so fully that he could not turn down Paris, though it hardly meets his criterion (No. Six or Seven?) about a place which gives a psychological advantage to neither side. The world is so divided over Vietnam that only the moon would fill the bill on that one. But Paris is the Western capital most hostile to U.S. policy and most likely to erupt in anti-American riots if Johnson tries to stall. The U.S. would have been better off in Warsaw; Communist police forces are tougher than ours on any kind of demonstration. Pnom Penh would have been even better, for this tiny Asian capital is a symbol of successful resistance to external and internal Communist forces; a model of that stability we claim we want. (Perhaps we prefer instability to any demonstration of the possibility of peaceful co-existence with China). Nobody is quite sure what Johnson is doing but the pattern of Hanoi's action is growing clearer. Apparently it had planned peace talks before Johnson's March 31 speech, and hopes by the unsettling effects of peace talks and new military attacks to overthrow the Thieu-Ky junta and bring in a representative government willing to negotiate with the NLF. If the White House really wants peace, Washington will have to find some way to get rid of Thieu and Ky if Hanoi and the NLF can't. On both the diplomatic and military fronts, Hanoi seems to have the initiative, perhaps because only Hanoi really knows what it wants and has a plan to get it: to wrest a political victory from a military stalemate. It has a real chance of winning this because unlike Washington it is prepared for political compromises while we are still the prisoner of our stale clichés.

ADD JOHNSON WHOPPERS: Pro-war Robert Shaplen, the *New Yorker's* correspondent in Vietnam, points out from Vientiane in its May 4 issue that the area between the 17th and the 20th parallel contains 27 percent of North Vietnam's people and not 10 percent as Johnson claimed.

WHAT HAPPENS: To the term "free world" when freedom bursts out in Czechoslovakia and is firmly strangled in Greece? When Moscow nervously wishes the Czechs would be a little less open about their freedom and Washington wishes the Greek military would be a little more discreet?

From A to Z and Back to the Old Malarkey

In my first weeks as Secretary of Defense I have devoted most of my energies to a comprehensive review of our policies and programs with respect to Vietnam. Among the more important conclusions which emerged from that effort was that the South Vietnamese were ready to bear an increasing share of the military burden in the future and thereby enable us to level off and in due time begin to reduce our contribution.

—Clifford to House Armed Services, April 30, 1968.

The military program in South Vietnam has made progress . . . Major U.S. assistance . . . is needed only until the insurgency has been suppressed or until the national security forces . . . of South Vietnam are capable of suppressing it. Secy. McNamara and Gen. Taylor reported . . . that by the end of this year the U.S. program for training Vietnamese should have progressed to the point where 1,000 United States military personnel . . . can be withdrawn.

—Kennedy White House Statement, Oct. 2, 1963.

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